

The Leys Area Forum Notes and Actions - draft

Tuesday 15th November 2011
Blackbird Leys Community Centre



Forum Topic: What can we do to improve community life in The Leys?

Introduction

This Leys Area Forum focused on 'Improving life in The Leys' and was an opportunity for local people to come along and help shape your local neighbourhood. Prior to the meeting there were short updates on The Leys Neighbourhood Partnership, Greener/Cleaner Oxford, the Parish Council and leaflets were distributed about an upcoming Tenants Roadshow to be held at the Leys Leisure Centre on 29th November.

A number of city and parish councillors were in attendance, as well as approx. 20 members of the community and several council officers

What participants said they liked about living in The Leys

- There is a vibrancy to the estate, people come together and there is good community spirit.
- We have a large number of trees and green spaces.
- There is an excellent bus service.
- It is a clean estate with very little fly tipping.
- Regular letter drops about specific issues are good for communication.
- The football and boxing clubs are well supported and provide a good service.
- Youth Provision, in general, is good.
- Community events have been really successful.
- Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground is trying to re-establish itself.

Participants' ideas for improving life in The Leys

Get more people involved with the community and community decision making processes:

- Find different ways to let people know what's happening. Not everybody has a computer or wants to attend a meeting.
- Get people interested in their community – there are many who just think "What's the point?" – so we need to demonstrate that change can happen and promote different ways for people to engage in and represent the community
- Suggestion boxes could be placed around the community to encourage people to share their views.

- Make sure that when improvements are made they are done properly e.g. the gates at Druce Way needed to be replaced twice as the first two gates were not strong enough.
- Support smaller community groups, particularly those who are struggling.

Bring the Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys together and organise more community wide events:

- Area Forums will be held every 6 months and will alternate between venues in Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys
- Community events are very successful. We could promote and organise more community activities and events that link the two communities. Next year could be linked to the Olympics and Diamond Jubilee. Could also hold next year's Ley's Fair at Gillian's Park – between both communities
- Better physical links (roads, paths etc) could be developed between Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys.

Improve education and opportunities for young people

- Improve education - start with under 5's and support the work of the Children's Centre.
- What can we do about the work ethics of young people? What jobs are there?
- Promote what is available for kids.

Specific suggestions to improve the community:

- If the new swimming pool goes ahead, it would be good to soften the boundaries with mature trees and shrubs.
- Ensure that The Leys gets the same service that is provided to the (wealthier) north of the city, e.g. regularity of street sweepers, particularly outside shops.
- Provide more dog 'mess' bins in Blackbird Leys Park and provide more general bins.
- Ask the bus company to get the no. 12 bus to run around Kestrel Crescent as a number of older people live around Falcon Close and it is some distance from a bus stop. There is a bus user's forum that might help with this.
- The variety of shops in The Leys is limited. Would it be possible to have different types of shops, e.g. there is no greengrocer?

Next Steps

These ideas will be followed up by Parish, City and County Councillors with support from City Council staff.

Ideas will also be passed on to the new Leys Neighbourhood Partnership which has been set up to:

1. work with the community to produce and implement a Leys Neighbourhood Action Plan based on local priorities
2. improve facilities and services and help make The Leys a place people feel proud of

Next Leys Area Forum

The next Leys Area Forum will be held in May 2012 (date to be decided) in Greater Leys.